



JACK DOYLE

MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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DOYLE RELEASES 2002 HOMELESS REPORT

Less than 1% change is the lowest in eight years, County continues to be a leader statewide in finding permanent homes for the homeless

Monroe County Executive Jack Doyle today released Monroe County's annual Homeless Report. Overall, homeless numbers from 2001 to 2002 remained essentially flat -- rising by 81 cases, or less than 1%. The number of single persons seeking assistance fell slightly. As outlined in the report, the County spent \$7.6 million on emergency and transitional housing last year.

The average person or family requiring service only spent 8 or 11 days, respectively, in temporary housing before being placed in a permanent home. Also, dispelling a common myth, the chronic homeless, or those that live on the street, accounted for only 1% of the homeless, with the remaining 99% being temporarily displaced by family disputes, release from institutions, eviction or other causes.

"Having virtually no increase in our homeless population demonstrates that our social safety net is working," said Doyle. "In addition, we continue to be a leader statewide in meeting the needs of the homeless by quickly helping them find stable and permanent homes. However, it remains our goal to aggressively assist the homeless and address the underlying causes of the problem."

Monroe County's "Length of Stay" in temporary housing is one of the shortest for urban counties in New York State. "Length of Stay" refers to the time a homeless person or family spends in a shelter or a hotel before being placed in a permanent home. For single men and women, the length of stay has remained less than 10 days since 1996. Families placed in hotels have a length of stay of less than 7 days before being placed in permanent housing and families in shelters typically are in transition for 14 days. The harder to place, larger families in temporary leased housing averaged an approximate one-month stay prior to placement in permanent housing.

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“Our ability to find new homes quickly for those in need demonstrates the tremendous work done by our staff in the Department of Human & Health Services (H&HS) to assist people in transition in our community,” said Doyle. “Also, I’m glad that this report points out that the vast majority of our homeless are not people living on the streets of Monroe County, but people displaced by family disputes, release from jail, and other similar reasons.”

The chronic homeless, or people that live on the streets, are what many individuals think of when defining the homeless population. Only 1% of the homeless in Monroe County fall into this category. The chronically homeless are those individuals who do not seek assistance from the Department of Human & Health Services.

On a monthly basis, county caseworkers, law enforcement and private sector personnel reach out to the chronically homeless in efforts to provide them with shelter and other services. This outreach occurs in the old subway beds, downtown parking garages and other areas where this population has been known to seek shelter. Even with this aggressive outreach effort, the chronic homeless remain a population that resists assistance.

Most of the people classified as homeless (56%) had been living with family members and were asked to leave due to overcrowding, drug abuse or strained relationships. The next largest group (20%) were recently released from institutions (prison/jail, hospital). Persons displaced due to eviction (10%), domestic violence (7%), arrival from outside Monroe County (4%), fire (1%) and property code violations (1%) comprise the remainder of those considered homeless.

County H&HS, working with local shelters and other service providers, currently has adequate resources to meet the needs of the homeless population. In 2002, DSS provided emergency/temporary housing to 8,533 families and individuals compared to 8,472 in 2001.

The full version of the 2002 Homeless Report can be obtained through the County’s web site, www.monroecounty.gov.

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